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ABSTRACT

This Kids Count report examines statewide trends in the well-being of South Carolina's children. The statistical portrait is based on 41 indicators in the areas of demographics, family, economic status, health, readiness and early school performance, scholastic achievement, and adolescent risk behaviors. The indicators are: (1) population; (2) births to teen mothers; (3) births to mothers not completing high school; (4) births to single mothers; (5) divorce rate; (6) single-parent family; (7) parents working; (8) abuse and neglect; (9) family violence; (10) out of home placements; (11) adult/child ratio; (12) poverty; (13) barriers to self-sufficiency; (14) income; (15) child support payments; (16) prenatal care; (17) low birth weight; (18) infant mortality; (19) childhood injuries and deaths; (20) immunization; (21) sexually transmitted diseases; (22) healthy lifestyles; (23) tobacco use; (24) disabilities; (25) emotional and behavioral disorders; (26) inadequate healthcare; (27) ambulatory care; (28) first-grade readiness; (29) first-grade failure rates; (30) overage for grade three; (31) special education; (32) achievement trends; (33) Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test; (34) dropout rates; (35) adolescents not in school or employed; (36) sexual activity and pregnancy; (37) alcohol use; (38) heavy drinking; (39) drugs; (40) juvenile delinquency; and (41) adolescent deaths. Statewide data and summary information are provided for each indicator. Fifteen tables are included and summarize specific indicator information. The report's findings indicate that too many children are at risk of not growing up to become self-supporting adults, with 25.1% in single-parent families, 21% in poverty, 30.9% not graduating from school,

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37.4% of high school students using alcohol, and 12.8% using drugs each month. (SD)

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South Carolina Kids Count, 2000

A. Baron Holmes

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Demographics

It is estimated that in 1998 there were 962,238 children under age 18 in the state. Of these, 597,213 were White, 352,214 were African-American and 12,811 were other races. There were 941,966 children under age 18 in 1980, 955,163 in 1970, and 992,476 in 1960.

Children represent a shrinking portion of the state's population. Those under 18 constituted 25.1% of the population in 1998, down from 41.7% in 1960, 36.9% in 1970 and 30.2% in 1980.

In 1998 the 307,911 pre-schoolers under age 6 were 8.0% of the overall population: 7.4% of Whites and 9.4% of African Americans.

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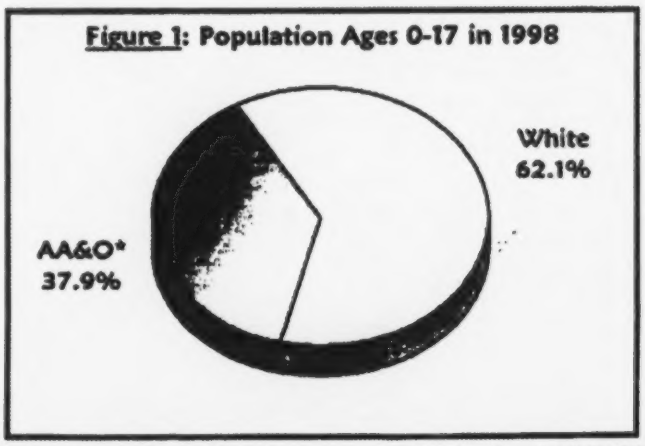
Figure 1: Population Ages 0-17 in 1998



* In all charts African-American is combined with other races, and abbreviated as AA&O. Other races comprise 1.3% of

children in the state.

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Family

Families have always been the most important influence in a child's life. Children depend on their families for material needs, stimulation and guidance. Family life is different in many ways from previous generations, and many families now face exceptional challenges.

Families with children now make up a smaller share of all households. Only 35.5% of all households in 1990, as compared with 49.0% of households in 1960, had children below the age of 18.

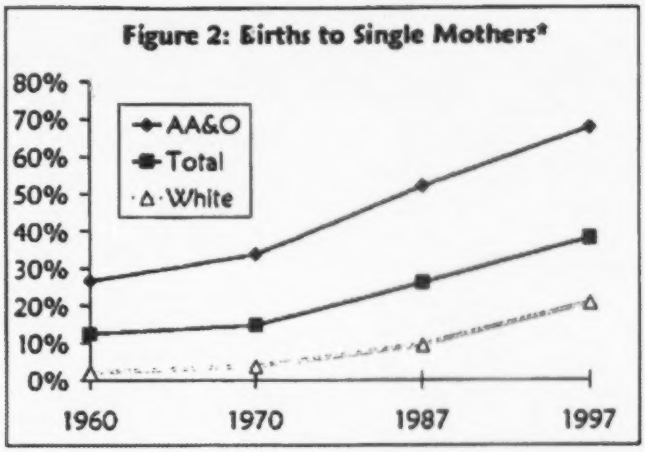
Births to Teen Mothers: In 1997, 3,441 babies were born to mothers younger than age 18. These babies were 6.6% of all children born in the state; 4.4% of all White babies and 10.3% of all African-American and Other babies were born to teen mothers under the age of 18. Of the babies born to these teens in 1997, 89.3% were born to single mothers.

In 1997, 8,540 babies were born to mothers younger than age 20. These babies were 16.4% of all children born in the state; 12.1% of all White babies and 23.7% of all African-American and Other babies were born to mothers under the age of 20. Of the babies born to these mothers in 1997, 80.9% were born to single mothers.

Births to Mothers Not Completing High School: Children's success is strongly influenced by the education of their parents. In 1997, 11,050 babies, 21.2% of all babies, were born to mothers of all ages who had not completed the 12th grade. In 1997, 18.5% of White and 25.8% of African-American and Other babies were born to mothers who had completed less than the 12th grade. This is a substantial improvement from 44.6% in 1970.

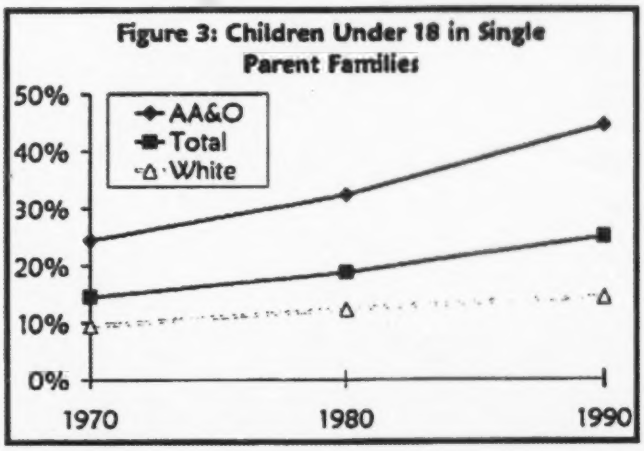
Births to Single Mothers: Births to single mothers have increased steadily over four decades. In 1997, 14,249 babies, 27.3% of all babies, were born to single mothers. A decade earlier in 1987, the percentage was 26.3% and in 1960 it was 12.3%. In 1997, 12.2% of White children and 53.2% of African-American and Other children were born to single mothers.

To these numbers should be added an additional group of 5,602 babies, 10.7% of all born in 1997, whose fathers formally acknowledged paternity but who had not married the mothers. When the paternity-acknowledged babies are added, the total number born to single mothers in 1997 was 19,851, constituting 38.0% of all babies, 20.7% of White babies, and 67.7% of African-American and Others.



Divorce Rate: In 1997, 43,411 marriage licenses were issued, while 15,780 divorce decrees involving 12,839 children were filed. In 1970, only 6,741 children were in families involved in divorce.

Single-Parent Family: Increasing numbers of children live in single-parent families. In 1990, 200,590 children lived with only one parent. This was 25.1% of all children, up from 18.9% in 1980 and 14.5% in 1970. In 1990, 14.5% of White children and 44.6% of African-American and Other children lived in single-parent families. Also in 1990, 57,567 or 22.3% of children under age 6 lived in single parent families: 11.2% of White and 44.8% of African American and Other pre-schoolers.



Parents Working: Increasingly, parents must divide their time between children and employers. In order to meet family financial needs, most parents must work and thus have less time for family life. In 1990, 66.5% of mothers with children under 6 and 78.0% with children 6 - 17 were in the labor force. This has increased substantially from 1960 when 36.8% of mothers with children under 6 were in the labor force. Most fathers also work: 63.7% of children under 6 are in families where both parents or the single parent work; 38.4% of children under 6 have both their parents or their single parent working 35 hours or more. Caring for children is a problem for parents unable to obtain quality, affordable daycare while they are at work.

Abuse and Neglect: In 1997-98, there were 39,105 children investigated as alleged victims of child abuse and neglect: of these 47.7% were male and 52.3% were female; 49.1% were White, and 50.9%

were African-American and Other. By age, 38.4% were 0 - 5, 40.6% were 6 - 12, and 21.0% were 13 - 17. Abuse and neglect victims were 0.9% of all children age 18 or younger; 0.7% of all Whites and 1.2% of all African-Americans and Others. In the indicated cases, 29.9% of abused and neglected children lived in two parent families, 46.3% in single parent families, 9.4% with extended families, and 14.3% in other circumstances.

Of the number of children in indicated cases of abuse and neglect, 14.8% were for physical abuse, 6.7% were for sexual abuse, 45.4% were for physical neglect, 4.5% were for medical neglect, 0.9% were for mental injury, 6.2% were for educational neglect, 0.8% were for abandonment, 0.7% were for delinquency, 47.5% were for threat of harm and 0.5% were for other types. These percentages do not sum to 100% because many investigations involved multiple areas of abuse and neglect.

Family Violence: In 1998, 35,652 domestic assaults were recorded by law enforcement officials. These domestic assaults comprised 31.6% of all assaults, which include aggravated assaults, simple assaults, and intimidation. Overall, 44.6% of all domestic assaults involve spouse abuse which constitutes 14.1% of all assaults). Since most family violence is not reported, the true incidence of family disruption is much more widespread than even the large number of reported cases would indicate.

Separation from Parents: Some children do not live with their natural parents. In 1990, 5.1% of all children did not live with their natural parents. Of these, 31,302, or 3.4% of children lived with relatives, 12,231 or 1.3% lived with non-relatives, and 3,615 were in institutional facilities.

Out of Home Placements: As of June 1999, 4,746 children lived in foster care. The median age at first placement in the state is 7.4 years. The ages of children in foster care were 14.4% 0-2, 12.3% 3-5, 23.5% 6-10, 17.4% 11-13, and 32.4% 14 and above. The foster care population is 50.2% males and 49.8% females. Regarding their future, 34.1% were under a plan for placement in adoptive homes, 38.7% for return to a parent or guardian, 3.6% for placement with a relative, 9.9% for independent living, 13.0% for permanent foster care, and 0.3% for other circumstances.

Adult/Child Ratio: A measure of potential adult attention for children from family and community is the ratio of adults to children and youth. In 1998 there were 2.99 adults for every person below age 18. This was up substantially from 1960, when there were only 1.40 adults for every person under the age 18. This indicates that today there are more adults potentially available to provide attention and care for each child than in the past.

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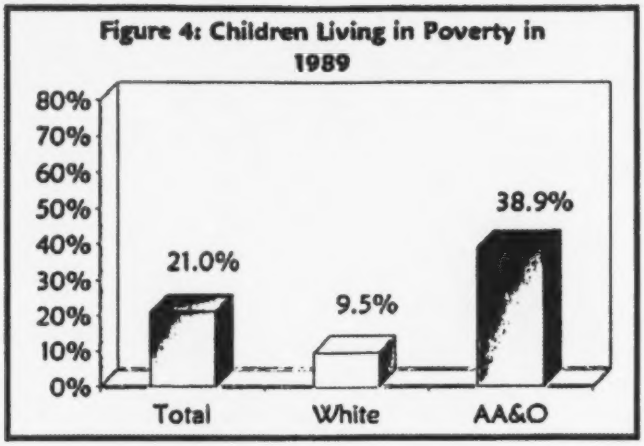
Economic Status

Low income makes it difficult for many families to provide the material and environmental enrichment necessary for healthy child development.

Poverty: In 1989, 190,873 children and youth under the age of 18 lived in 83,423 families with incomes below poverty. Over 21.0% of all children and youth lived below poverty: 9.5% of Whites and 38.9% of African-Americans and Others. A rough estimate of child poverty in 1995 calculated by the Census Bureau was 24.5%.



Poverty has always been a serious problem. While the rate among children under age 18 in 1989 was 21.0%, it was 21.2% in 1979 and 28.7% in 1969.

Children and the elderly are the age groups most seriously affected by poverty. In 1989, 22.6% of children 0 - 5 (10.6% White, 42.1% African-American and Other), and 20.2% of children 6 - 17 (8.9% White, 37.4% African-American and Other), lived in poverty; 20.5% of persons 65 years and older lived in poverty. Historically, the poverty rate among the elderly was much higher. During the last two decades, federal policy actions have substantially improved the economic status of older persons but have not done so for children.

Single-parent families are most likely to be poor. In 1989, 50.0% of children in single-parent families lived in poverty, but only 9.3% of children in married-couple families were poor. Children in single-parent families made up 67.0% of all the state's children living in poverty.

In 2000, the poverty level was $14,150 for a family of three and $17,050 for a family of four. The poverty threshold is often criticized as an arbitrary number. People can still be poor but may be just above the poverty level. Federal programs utilize varying thresholds. For example, in 1989 there were 247,685 children ages 0-17 who were less than 125 percent of poverty; thus an additional 56,812 children were just above the poverty level but could still be considered poor.

Percent of Children under 18 in Poverty						
	White		African American & Other		Total	
Poverty	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 50%	21,898	4.0%	71,603	20.1%	93,501	10.3%
Under 100%	52,430	9.5%	138,443	38.9%	190,873	21.0%
Under 125%	77,388	14.0%	170,297	47.9%	247,685	27.2%
Under 150%	104,488	18.9%	199,594	56.1%	304,082	33.4%
Under 175%	138,155	24.9%	227,229	40.2%	365,384	40.2%
Under 185%	151,235	27.3%	237,239	66.7%	388,474	42.7%
Under 200%	171,548	31.0%	249,762	70.2%	421,310	46.3%
Total Children	554,000	-	355,732	-	909,732	-

Barriers to Self-Sufficiency: Poverty often traps families in dependency. Many poor families have barriers, such as lack of transportation or a phone, that prevent them from becoming self-sufficient. During 1990, 10.9% of households did not have a car: 5.7% of Whites and 25.1% of African-Americans and Others. This issue becomes more critical in rural areas where there is little or no public transportation available. Approximately 9.1% of all households did not have a telephone. This is more often a problem in renter-occupied housing units where 19.0% of households had no phone.

Income: The mean income of families with children in 1989 was $35,561. In 1979, it had been $33,061, adjusted for inflation (i.e., in 1989 dollars). The mean income of single-parent families with children was $15,548 in 1989, as compared with $41,991 in married-couple families with children. From 1989 to 1997, state real dollar per capita income (eliminating inflation) increased by 11.7%.

Child Support Payments: There were 18,990 families receiving Temporary Aid to Needy Families in fiscal year 1999, but only 22.1% had child support court orders. Their average monthly payment of child support was $182.91, including child support receipts and tax refund intercepts. In addition, during fiscal year 1999, an estimated 47,055 parents in non-TANF families were obligated to pay a monthly average of $215.70. Information is not available regarding the amount actually paid.

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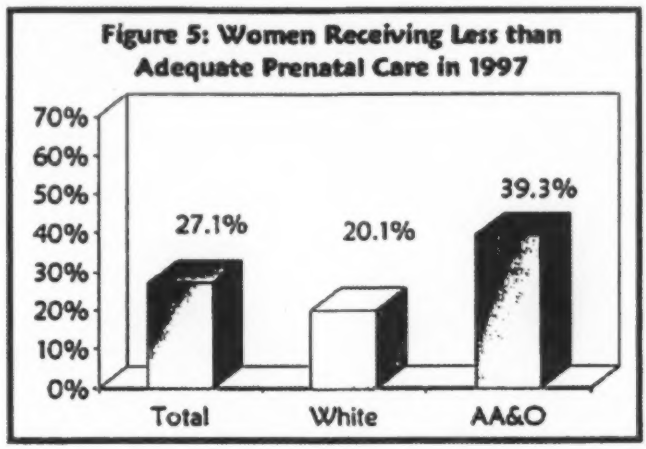
Health

Good health during a child's formative years helps children to reach their maximum potential. Good health requires healthy lifestyles and effective primary care, starting during the prenatal period and continuing through adolescence into adulthood. Children's health reflects the well-being of the community, as well as how adequately they are protected.

Prenatal Care: Early and continuous prenatal care can make a significant difference in assuring births of healthy babies. Delayed or insufficient prenatal care is associated with low birthweight and other health risks for infants. In 1997, 9,988, or 19.1% of pregnant women received no prenatal care in the first three months of pregnancy. In 1997, 14,172, or 27.1% of pregnant women received less than adequate prenatal care: 6,623, or 20.1% of Whites and 7,549, or 39.3% of African-Americans and

Others. In that same year, 738 women received no prenatal care at all.



Low Birthweight: During the decade since 1985-87, the overall infant mortality rate decreased by 32.3% from 13.4 to 9.1 per 1000. For Whites, the rate decreased by 36.7% from 9.7 to 6.2 per 1000, while for African-Americans and Others the rate decreased by 26.7% from 19.1 to 14.0 per 1000. Over the three-year period 1995-97, 598 White and 800 African-American and Other infants died before age one. By comparison, 928 White and 1,165 African-American and Other infants died during 1985-87.

Infant Mortality: During the decade since 1985-87, the overall infant mortality rate decreased by 32.3% from 13.4 to 9.1 per 1000. For Whites, the rate decreased by 36.7% from 9.7 to 6.2 per 1000, while for African-Americans and Others the rate decreased by 26.7% from 19.1 to 14.0 per 1000. Over the three-year period 1995-97, 598 White and 800 African-American and Other infants died before age one. By comparison, 928 White and 1,165 African-American and Other infants died during 1985-87.

Childhood Injuries and Deaths: Childhood deaths and injuries reflect whether communities are safe for children. In 1998, 109,330 children in the state went to the emergency room because of injuries. Boys are injured more often than girls. Children visit the emergency room at comparable rates for each age from 0 to 17.

In South Carolina, the major causes of death among young children are unintentional injuries, cancer, homicide, and congenital anomalies. Over the three year period 1995-97, 369 White and 377 African-American and Other children ages 1-14 died in the state. During 1985-87, 464 White and 410 African-American and Other children died.

Immunization: Immunization rates are an important indication of whether young children are receiving adequate preventive health care. During FY 1989-90, 52.1% of children less than two years old seen in public health clinics were not fully immunized against such preventable diseases as Polio, Measles, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Haemophilus Influenza B and Whooping Cough. After a concerted statewide campaign to increase immunizations, the percentage of children seen in public health clinics who were not fully immunized in 1999 had declined in the state to 11.0%. The DHEC statewide birth registry survey of all two year old children found that 91.9% were fully immunized in 1997-98. This success demonstrates the potential to improve the status of children when the leadership of the state and its communities act decisively together.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Children and youth are infected with sexually transmitted diseases

through sexual abuse or irresponsible sexual activity. National prevalence rates indicate: a 1 in 8 chance that sexually active 15 year-old girls will develop pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), the most rapidly increasing cause of infertility; 10-29% of sexually active adolescent girls and 10% of sexually active teen boys are infected with chlamydia, the most common cause of PID; and as many as 15% of teen girls are infected with human papilloma virus, often with strains linked to cervical cancer. Furthermore, research evidence indicates that susceptibility to HIV/AIDS increases by 3 to 8 times through prior infection with various STDs.

According to national studies, approximately 1 in 4 sexually experienced youth aged 13-19 acquires a STD every year; since two-thirds of all high school students have had sexual intercourse and half engage in intercourse over a three month period, this would suggest that 10-15% of teens are infected with STDs annually. For 1999, this would indicate that an estimated 38,890 to 58,335 youth ages 13-19 in the state were infected with a STD. In the state, there were 260 reported cases of children under age 15 and 3,322 youth ages 15 - 19 infected with gonorrhea; 597 youth under 15 and 8,068 ages 15 - 19 were reported infected with chlamydia.

Healthy Lifestyles: The Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 1999 found that many high school students are not following good health habits. The YRBS revealed that 28% felt that they were overweight; 40% were trying to lose weight: 26% of boys and 54% of girls. Although during a week 79% of high school students ate fruit, 57% ate salad, and over 82% ate vegetables, only 18% ate the recommended five or more servings of fruit and vegetables per day. During a week, 47% did stretching or muscle strengthening exercises, and 55% exercised in sports for 20 minutes three or more times that made them sweat or breathe hard.

Tobacco Use: Cigarette smoking starts at a young age and often becomes habitual. In 1992-93 among students 15 and older, 13.8% first smoked by age 11, 30.8% by age 13, and 42.7% by age 15. In a typical month, 14.7% of 7th and 8th graders and 23.1% of high school students smoked cigarettes. White youths were much more likely than African-Americans to smoke: 29.2% of White 7th to 12th graders used cigarettes, in comparison with 6.6% of African-Americans. A smaller but significant group of high school students (8.2%) used smokeless tobacco monthly; it was used primarily by White males (23.1% compared with 2.3% of all other race and sex groups). Since the 1992-93 survey, the YRBS indicates that monthly cigarette smoking among high school students increased statewide from 27% in 1993 to 39% in 1997 and declined to 36% in 1999, still a one-third increase over 1992-93 rates. The YRBS showed that statewide among high school students in 1999, 45% of White males, 47% of White females, 27% of African-American males and 19% of African-American females smoked during a month.

Disabilities: No data are collected on the true prevalence of disabilities within the state. According to nationally reported estimates, over 10% of children and youth have developmental disabilities at any point in time, and more than 17% are affected at some time before age 18 by deafness, blindness, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, speech defects, developmental delays, learning disabilities, and emotional or behavioral problems. For 1998 this suggests that at least 96,220 children and youth under age 18 in the state are currently affected by disabilities.

Approximately 5% children and youth nationally have serious disabilities which have lifelong implications for work, social life and community living. Typically among children and youth, there are 1 - 2% who are mentally retarded, 2 - 3% who have serious emotional disturbances, over 1% with orthopedic or multiple disabilities, including cerebral palsy and many hereditary conditions, and under 1% with visual or hearing impairments.

Less severe health disabilities also affect the lives of many children. Over 3% of children have one or

more of these limitations. Such serious but less severe disabilities affect 1 - 2% who have respiratory problems (asthma, chronic bronchitis), 0.5 - 1.0% with neurologic problems (epilepsy and seizures), and less than 1% with circulatory problems (congenital heart defects and acquired diseases).

Other disabilities are identified primarily in school performance. These would include 38,726 students in grades 1-12 with learning disabilities and 19,827 students in grades 1-12 with speech/language deficits.

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: While no state level data are available on the prevalence of mental health problems, national estimates indicate that at least 10 - 15% and as many as 20% of school-age children exhibit mental and behavioral disorders ranging from mild to severe. At the lower estimate of 10% of the school-aged population, there are 65,430 children and youth in the state with emotional and behavioral disorders. Conduct disorders, attention deficit, depression, and anxiety disorders are the most prevalent, each affecting 3% to 10% of school-aged children. These disorders may occur simultaneously in a child. The prevalence rates are highest among males, adolescents, and disadvantaged persons in communities under stress and lacking social cohesion; depression, however, is more prevalent among females. On the YRBS, 20% of boys and 33% of girls in high school reported that during the past year they felt so sad and hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more that they stopped doing some usual activities. Another indicator of emotional problems is the 8% of high school students in South Carolina who reported that they had "attempted suicide" in the past year: 5% of boys and 10% of girls. Suicide attempts resulted in 4% of high school students reporting injury, poisoning, or overdose requiring treatment by a doctor or nurse.

Inadequate Healthcare: No county level data is routinely collected regarding the number of children and youth with inadequate healthcare. According to estimates by the Bureau of the Census through the annual Current Population Survey, an average of 14.8% or 142,406 children and youth under age 18 in South Carolina had no health insurance coverage in 1998. The number lacking basic accessible primary care is at least double the number lacking insurance. Those lacking primary care are often dependent on health services at school. The ratio of students to nurses recommended nationally is 750 : 1. In the state, this would suggest the need for 892 nurses; 548 are currently available.

Ambulatory Care: When children lack adequate primary care, whether through lack of insurance, through limited access, or through failing to utilize available care, preventable and treatable conditions become serious and require hospitalization. A useful indicator of inadequate primary care is the percentage of all hospitalizations that could typically have been avoided through ambulatory care, especially for pneumonia, asthma, diarrhea and vomiting, dehydration, and severe ear, nose, and throat infections. The share of hospitalizations for these types of conditions could normally be kept below 20%; for children in the state under the age of 18 during 1998, the share was 30.4% for Whites and 35.0% for African-Americans and Others.

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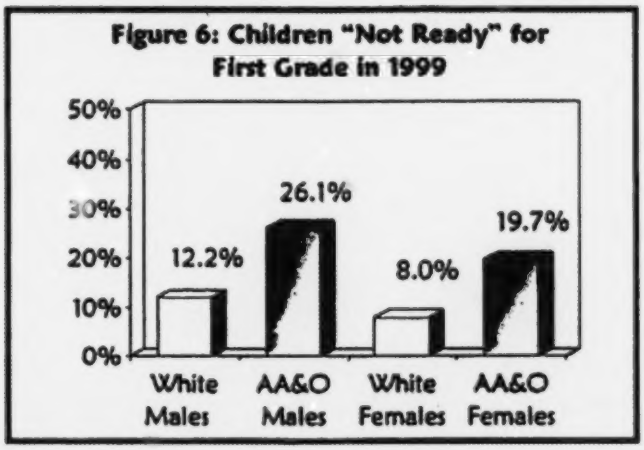
Readiness and Early School Performance

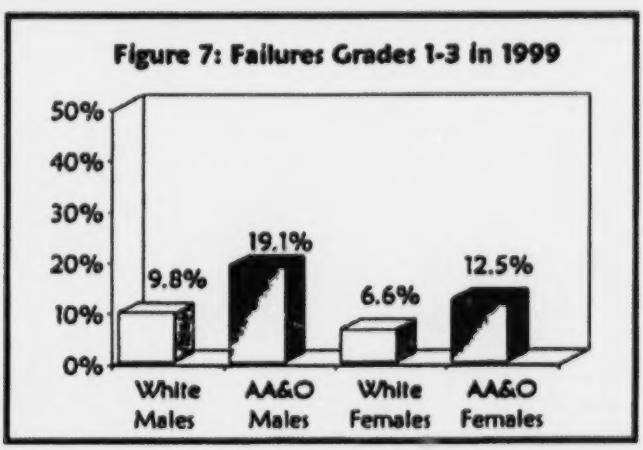
Too many children reach school without the readiness skills needed for success in learning, such as visual and auditory discrimination, memory recall, and knowledge of colors, letters, names of objects, etc. Likewise, some schools are not ready to respond appropriately to the varying developmental levels of children in the early grades. As a result, too many students do not experience the success needed to create the motivation and engagement that sustain learning.

1st Grade "Readiness" on 1999/2000 Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB):	
8,487 children not ready	16.1% children not ready



1st Grade Failures in 1999:	
3,670 children failing	6.6% children failing

Failures Grades 1-3 in 1999: (approximate cumulative percentage of grades one, two and three)	
6,292 children failing	11.7% children failing



Overage for Grade 3 in 1998	
8,164 children overage	16.1% children overagechildren overage

Special Education: Large numbers of children are placed in special education classes. In elementary school, 15,564 six and seven year olds and 17,795 eight and nine year-olds were enrolled in special education classes during 1998-99, approximately 15.2% and 17.3% of their age groups respectively.

Readiness Summary: A serious problem exists in terms of student readiness and school success in the early grades. With 16.1% assessed not ready for the 1st grade, 16.1% overage in grade 3, and 17.3% of eight and nine year-olds placed in special education, unacceptably large numbers of students begin school without good prospects of success in future school achievement and graduation.

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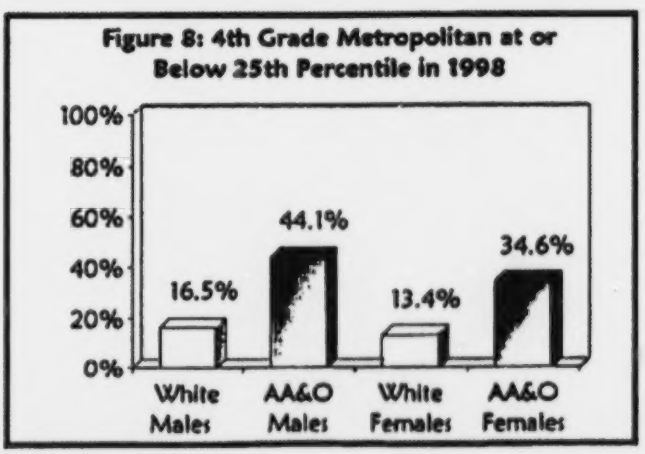
Scholastic Achievement

By the end of elementary school, significant numbers of students perform below minimum standards. The following standardized test measures, comparing county performance with student norms nationwide or to state minimum standards, should be used in combination with routine classroom assessments more reflective of real-world performance skills.

Special Education: Special education placements reflect both the significant number of children with serious handicapping conditions and an even greater number of students with mild learning and behavioral problems that have not been accommodated successfully by the regular educational program. The result is a large system of self-contained, resource, and itinerant services to meet the needs of 19,827 speech and language impaired, 38,726 learning disabled, 5,840 emotionally disabled, 17,430 mentally impaired, and 5,445 physically handicapped, deaf, blind, and other handicapped students. Special education classes served approximately 13.4% of all students in grades 1 - 12 during 1997-98.

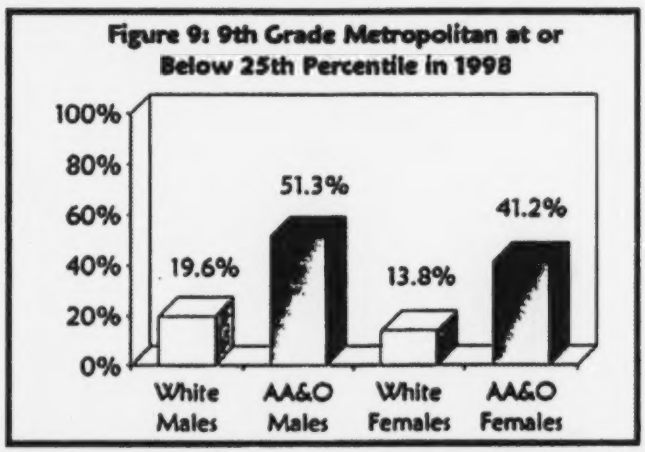
Grade 4 Metropolitan at or below 25th percentile in Reading, Math, and Language in 1998 (i.e. below 75% of students nationwide)	
11,932 children at or below 25th percentile	25.3% of children at or below 25th percentile



8th Grade BSAP (Basic Skills Assessment Program)
Students not meeting state minimum standards in 1998

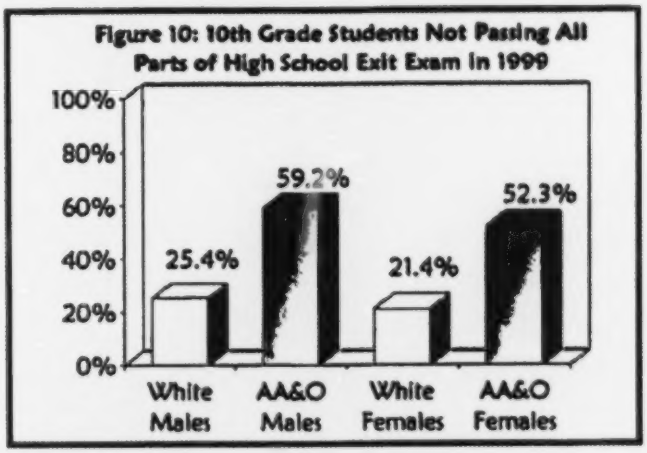
	Math		Reading	
	# below standard	% below standard	# below standard	% below standard
All Students	16,585	35.00%	14,985	31.60%
White Males	3,133	22.60%	3,346	24.10%
White Females	3,164	23.40%	2,268	16.80%
African-American & Other Males	4,923	53.90%	4,875	53.40%
African-Amer. & Other Females	5,037	51.60%	4,150	42.50%

Grade 9 Metropolitan at or below 25th percentile in Reading, Math, and Language in 1998	
15,156 students at or below 25th percentile	30.0% of students at or below 25th percentile



Achievement Trends: How has performance on standardized achievement tests changed over the past 15 years? During the 1980s, student performance on the BSAP tests improved dramatically. Between 1981 and 1990, the percentage of 8th grade students in the county who did not meet standards declined from 47.1% to 24.6% in math and from 39.3% to 21.4% in reading. During the 1990's the BSAP trend changed, with 28.1% not meeting 8th grade math standards in 1998 and 26.7% in reading. On standardized tests, the first year when South Carolina students take the exam is comparable to the challenge encountered by the national norm group which took the test only once. Looking at first year data, the percentage of 4th grade students at or below the 25th percentile of national norms was 23.7% in 1983 on the CTBS, 25.6% in 1990 on the Stanford, and 27.3% in 1995 on the Metropolitan; for 9th graders, the percentage in the bottom quarter was 25.6% in 1990 and 19.0% in 1995.

Exit Exam	
Exit Exam - not passing all parts of Exit Exam on first attempt in the 10th grade in 1999	
14,268 students did not pass all parts	36.4% of students did not pass all parts



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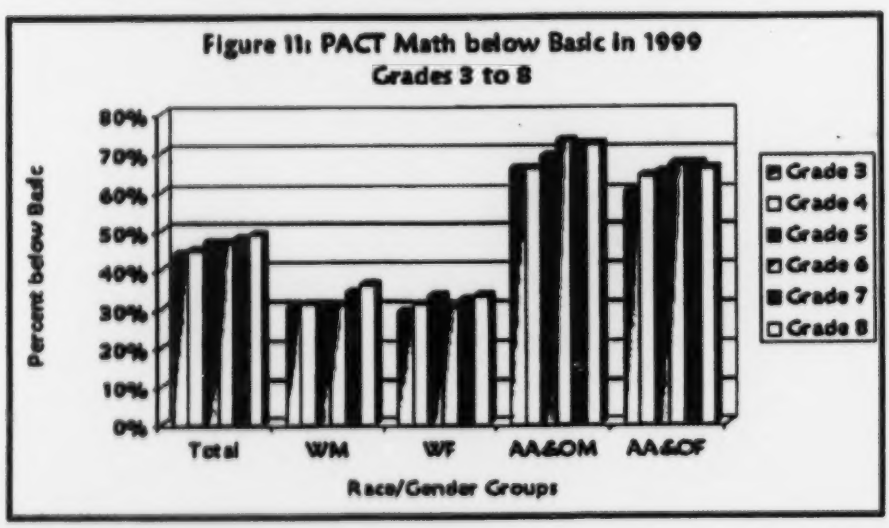
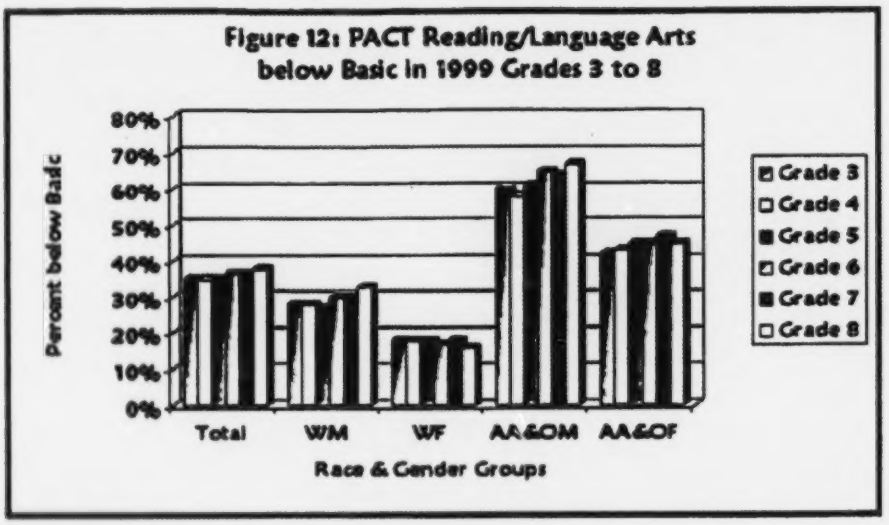
Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test

The Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) was first administered in 1999 for grades 3-8 in math and reading/language arts. MATH assesses skills in numbers, numerical and algebraic concepts, patterns and functions, geometry, measurement, probability and statistics.

READING/LANGUAGE ARTS assesses reading, listening, speaking, writing, research, and communication with technology. The first PACT assessment found a high percentage of elementary and middle grades students performing below standards and only a modest number above basic.



PACT Scores Below Basic on Math (%)						
Test Result	Grade	Total	WM	WF	AA&OM	AA&OF
Below Basic	3	44	30	29	66	60
	4	45	31	31	66	64
	5	47	31	33	69	65
	6	47	31	30	73	67
	7	48	34	32	72	67
	8	49	36	33	72	66
Basic	3	38	43	45	29	33
	4	37	41	45	29	30
	5	37	43	44	27	30
	6	37	43	46	23	29
	7	36	41	46	24	28
	8	36	41	45	24	29
Proficient	3	13	18	19	4	6
	4	13	19	18	5	5
	5	12	18	17	4	4
	6	11	18	17	4	4
	7	11	16	16	3	4
	8	10	15	15	3	4
Advanced	3	5	9	8	1	1
	4	5	8	7	1	1
	5	4	8	6	1	1
	6	5	8	6	1	1
	7	5	8	6	1	1
	8	5	8	7	1	1



PACT Scores Below Basic on Reading/Language Arts (%)						
Test Result	Grade	Total	WM	WF	AA&OM	AA&OF
Below Basic	3	35	28	18	60	42
	4	35	28	18	58	43
	5	35	27	18	61	45
	6	37	30	17	65	45
	7	37	30	18	64	47
	8	38	33	16	67	45
Basic	3	37	40	36	31	40
	4	37	39	36	33	39
	5	39	43	39	32	41
	6	39	43	40	29	41
	7	39	43	40	30	41
	8	41	45	44	29	29
Proficient	3	26	30	41	9	17
	4	26	30	40	9	18
	5	24	28	38	8	14
	6	21	24	36	6	13
	7	21	24	35	6	12
	8	19	20	33	4	11
	3	2	2	4	0	1
	4	2	2	5	0	1
	5	2	2	6	0	1
	6	3	3	7	0	1

	7	3	3	7	0	1
Advanced	8	3	2	7	0	1

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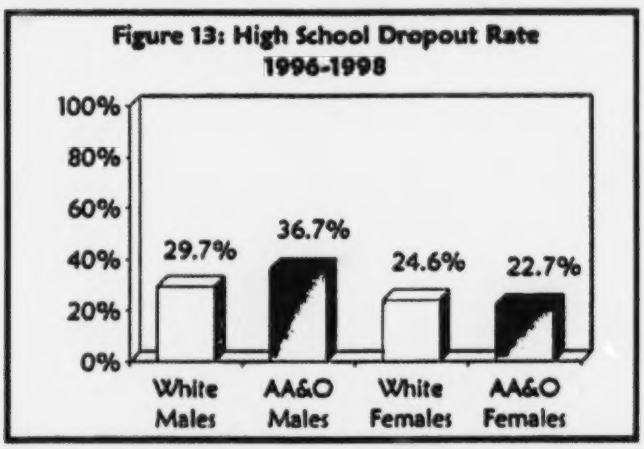
Dropout Rate 8th grade students no longer enrolled in grade 12 (Average of students for the four years ending 1996 - 98	
82 students drop out annually	27.6% students drop out



Dropouts: A distressing number of students drop out and fail to graduate. An average of 28.7% of 8th graders failed to graduate from county schools five years later during the period 1980-84, 31.9% during 1985-89, and 27.0% during 1990-94, 19.7% during 1995-96, and 27.2% during 1997-98. During 1997-98, 89.6% of all who did graduate received the State High School Diploma, while 6.2% received a State Certificate for meeting the required Carnegie units but not passing the Exit Exam, and the remaining 4.3% received a District Certificate, given to school attendees who neither attained the required Carnegie units nor passed the Exit Exam.

Fortunately, many dropouts enroll in adult education programs and either earn a high school diploma or obtain a GED. During 1998-99, 22 Adult Education high school diplomas were awarded to school completers and 41 GEDs were awarded in the county. Over time, adult education high school diplomas and GEDs increase the effective school completion rate substantially. In the 1990 Census, 24.5% of county resident 25 - 34 year-olds said they had not completed either high school or a GED: 20.4% of White males, 19.5% of White females, 31.1% of African-American and Other males, and 35.4% of African-American and Other females.

Achievement Summary: The numbers of students testing below basic on the PACT and dropping out range from 25.8% to 56.0%. Thus, far too many students fail to acquire the knowledge, skills, learning habits, and motivation necessary to compete in the economy or contribute to society in the 21st Century.

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Adolescent Risk Behaviors

Not in School or Employed: During 1990, 160 teenagers ages 16-19 were idle, meaning they neither worked nor were enrolled in school. Idle teens comprised 9.7% of their age group. The data reflect a serious failure in both school completion and the critical transition from school to work, significantly affecting their development as future workers. The rates of idleness among teens during 1990 were:

6.3% White Males	11.7% Af.Am. & Other Males
9.8% White Females	13.0% Af.Am. & Other Females

Sexual Activity and Pregnancy: Significant and increasing numbers of teenagers now engage in sexual activity. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) administered to a representative sample of high school students throughout South Carolina showed that sexual activity begins at an early age:16% of female and 30% of male students have engaged in intercourse by age 13; by age 15, 43% the females and 53% of males have engaged in sexual intercourse. Statewide, 49% of females and 48% of males in the 11th and 12th grades reported engaging in intercourse during the past three months. Furthermore, 22% of female and 32% of male 11th and 12th graders have had intercourse with four or more partners during their lifetimes.

****NOTICE****

The paper copies of the Kids Count 2000 that were distributed in May 2000 contain errors in the following paragraph.

Below is the correct paragraph. Please do not distribute copies of the report without these changes.

Premature sexual activity often results in pregnancy. In the state, 4,498 girls between the ages of 14 and 17 became pregnant in 1997 and 4,274 in 1998. This represented 3.9% of all girls ages 14 - 17 in 1997; several times this percentage become pregnant at least once by age 18. The pregnancy rate for ages 14 - 17 was 3.0% for Whites and 5.4% for African-Americans and Others. Of all pregnancies to 14-17 year olds, 79.5% resulted in live births, with almost all other pregnancies ending in abortions.

Teen pregnancy rates increased substantially across the state during the 1980s; as a result, greater emphasis was devoted to prevention of teen pregnancy. Since 1989, the teen pregnancy rate in South Carolina has decreased by 29.2% .

Alcohol Use: In 1992-93, 20.8% of 7th and 8th graders and 37.4% of high schoolers said they had used alcohol in the past month. Of White males in grades 7 - 12, 36.1% had used it in the past month, compared with 30.0% of African-American males; likewise, 32.7% of White females said they had used alcohol, compared with 21.2% of African-American females. Many youth first used alcohol at an early age. Among students 15 and older, 16.2% had used alcohol by age 11 or younger, 36.1% by age 13, and 58.3% by age 15.

During the previous year, 33.1% of 7th and 8th graders and 42.5% of high schoolers said they had ridden with a drinking driver. Of seniors who drive, 28.8% said they had driven after drinking, and 7.7% of seniors said they had attended school while under the influence of alcohol. Widespread use is encouraged by the ready availability and low perceived risk of alcohol. Among students who expressed an opinion, 58.2% of eighth graders and 87.2% of seniors felt that beer was easy to get; 50.9% of eighth

graders and 48.5% of seniors felt there was not a great risk in using it regularly.

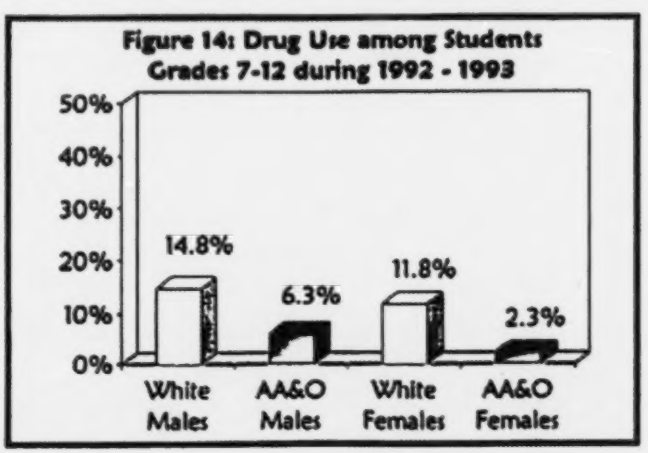
The statewide sample YRBS survey showed that the percentage of high school students drinking alcohol monthly has increased only slightly from 44% in 1993 to 45% in 1999. Statewide among these high school students, 54% of White males, 53% of White females, 38% of African-American males, and 32% of African-American females drank alcohol during a month in South Carolina.

Heavy Drinking: When asked how many drinks, if any, they usually consume, 28.1% of all students in grades 7 - 12 in 1992-93 responded 3 or more drinks at a time and 16.3% of reported frequently drinking 5 or more drinks. The YRBS indicates that statewide binge drinking among high school students remained at 25% between 1993 and 1999: 38% of White males, 31% of White females, 21% of African-American males, and 9% of African-American females.

Drugs: In 1992-93, 5.6% of 7th and 8th graders and 12.8% of high schoolers reported using illegal drugs during the previous month. Among students in grades 7 - 12, use was reported mostly by White males (14.8%) and White females (11.8%); use among African-American males was 6.3% and African-American females, 2.3%. Some young people first used drugs at an early age: among students 15 and older, 3.0% had experienced their first use by age 11 or sooner; 8.6% had used a drug by age 13, and 17.3% by age 15.

Of seniors who had started using marijuana, 9.7% began use at home, 44.1% at a friend's home, and 46.2% elsewhere. During the past year, 4.0% of all high school students said that they used marijuana at home, 9.2% at a friend's house, and 6.3% in a car. In the past year, 6.6% of all high school students who drive and 10.5% of seniors who drive said that they had driven after using drugs . Furthermore, 7.7% of high school seniors said that they had attended school while under the influence of drugs. Such use is encouraged by the ready availability of drugs: 28.3% of 8th graders who had an opinion said it is easy to get marijuana and 20.9% said it is easy to get cocaine or crack; 75.2% of seniors said it is easy to get marijuana and 59.8% said it was easy to get cocaine or crack.

The YRBS indicates that statewide drug use monthly among high school students has grown substantially since the 1992-93 survey. Monthly marijuana use by high school students statewide has increased 112% from 12.5% in 1993 to 26.5% in 1997, but declined slightly to 24.5% in 1999, still double the rate reflected in the 1992-93 survey: 27% of White males, 24% of White females, 29% of African-American males, and 16% of African-American females in South Carolina.



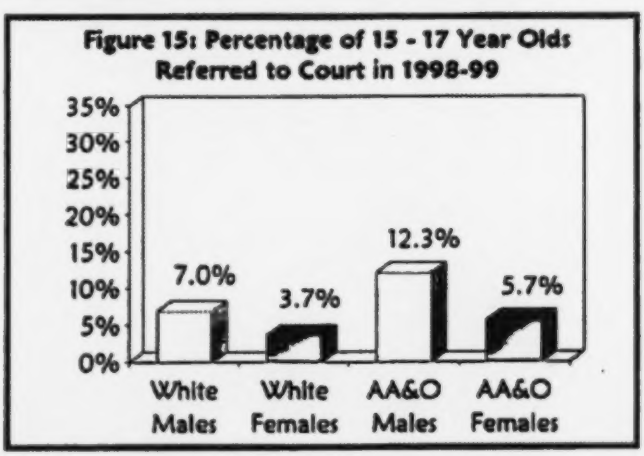
Juvenile Delinquency: In 1998-99, 29,670 individual juvenile offenders in the state were referred to the Solicitor for delinquency; of these, 14.4% were age 12 or younger, 29.0% were 13 or 14, and 56.5% were 15 or older.

Of the referrals to the family court, 7.7% of all referrals were for violent and serious crimes which include drug trafficking, acts against persons for murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, and serious property offenses for arson and burglary. Also, 4,711 juvenile cases constituting 15.9% of all referrals were for status offenses. Status offenses include truancy, running away, incorrigibility, and other offenses that would not be crimes for adults.

Delinquents are likely to live in families with low income: 28.9% lived in families with income under $10,000, 34.8% with $10,000-$19,999 and 36.2% with $20,000 or more. Furthermore, only 22.6% of delinquents lived with both natural parents, while 52.6% lived in a single parent household and 22.0% lived with other relatives. Delinquency or criminal activity occurs among many related family members: 39.0% had at least one family member who was delinquent or had some criminal record.

Youth referred to the family courts are likely to have been there before. In 1998-99, 51.4% had at least one prior referral and 19.7% had been referred to court 3 times or more. Many were referred at an early age. For delinquents 15 - 17 years old, 3.6% had been referred by the age of 10, 12.7% by the age of 12, and 37.1% by the age of 14.

During 1998-99, 11,543 youth ages 15 to 17 were referred to the family courts. In the state, 6.8% of all youth 15 to 17 are referred to court in one year and roughly double that percentage are referred at least once by age 18. Furthermore, the National Youth Survey indicates that typically across the United States the proportion of youth engaging in crime is two or three times the number ever apprehended. In 1998-99, there were 2,008 juvenile commitments to state institutions.



Deaths: During 1993-97, 8 youth ages 15 to 19 died. Automobile accidents were the major cause, resulting in 2 deaths between 1993 and 1997; homicides killed 0 youth 15 to 19 years old during the five-year period. Alcohol use is often a significant factor in deaths among teenagers.

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Summary

Facing the Scope of Problems: The data on families, economic status, health, readiness, school achievement, and adolescent risk behaviors provide a troublesome picture of the condition of children in South Carolina. The 25.1% of children in single-parent families, 21.0% in poverty, 30.9% not graduating from school, 37.4% of high school students using alcohol and 12.8% using drugs each month, and other data profiled in this report suggest that too many children are at risk of not growing up to become self-supporting adults, good family members, and responsible community citizens.

Emphasizing the Positive: South Carolina Kids Count reports have been developed to describe the problems of children in each of the counties. Fortunately, the majority of children and youth is doing well, and some are doing very well. One simple description is the percentage of children who do not fall into the problem categories reported. For the state, 83.6% of children are born to non-teen mothers ages 20 or older, 62.0% are born to married parents, and 74.9% lived in two-parent families; 79.0% were not poor and 53.7% lived in families with incomes above $28,300, twice the poverty level for a family of three in 2000; 90.8% of babies were born with normal birthweights, 83.9% were assessed as ready for the first grade, 51% scored basic or better on the PACT for 8th grade math and 62% for 8th grade reading, 63.6% passed all parts of the Exit Exam in the 10th grade, and 67.1% graduated with their class; in a typical month, 62.6% of high school students do not drink alcohol, 80.4% do not use drugs, and 76.9% do not smoke. Unfortunately, the absence of a problem is not always an indicator of success. Some data is available for exemplary performance: for example, 28% of 3rd graders and 22% of 8th graders scored proficient or advanced in reading on the PACT and 18% of 3rd graders and 15% of 8th graders on math on the PACT. Unfortunately, data on success is not generally available.

Despite the limitations of success data, we must emphasize the positive in providing good support and appropriate influences for children and youth. Recent philosophy and publications such as those of the Search Institute (700 South Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN, 55415-1138, tel. 1-800-888-7828), emphasize the critical importance of "developmental assets" to promote and support positive development. One short book from the Search Institute, (What Kids Need to Succeed, by Peter J. Benson, Judy Gailbraith, and Pamela Espeland, 1995) presents an excellent array of suggestions for promoting developmental assets through families, community, faith congregations, and schools. If each family, school, and religious congregation assertively worked to build such assets, the problems described in this report would be reduced dramatically.

This version of the Kids Count report will be revised as more recent and additional data become available. Please send us your corrections and suggestions for improvement: We welcome your ideas for ways to make the state and county reports more useful and accurate. Please utilize local data sources whenever possible to supplement the profile provided through our report.

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We welcome your suggestions of how we may make the SC Kids Count reports more useful and accurate. Please utilize local data sources whenever possible to supplement the information provided in our reports.

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